

**EMMA KUNZ**  
**VISIONARY DRAWINGS**

AN EXHIBITION CONCEIVED  
WITH CHRISTODOULOS PANAYIOTOU

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23 MARCH – 19 MAY 2019

Emma Kunz (1892–1963, Switzerland) considered herself primarily a healer and researcher of nature, yet predicted that her legacy of over 400 drawings would be seen by future generations. Despite not receiving a formal art education and never exhibiting during her lifetime, Kunz is now considered a prolific pioneer of spiritual art. Contemporary artist Christodoulos Panayiotou (1978, Cyprus) has developed a continued interest in Kunz and how her drawings might be perceived today. He was invited to collaborate with the Serpentine Galleries' curators on the research and display of the exhibition, which is the first to present Kunz's work in the UK.

Kunz discovered her gifts for telepathy, prophesy and healing at an early age and practised as a naturopath, dedicating her research to the restorative energies of plants and minerals. In 1938, at the age of forty-six, she first began making large pendulum-assisted drawings. She used radiesthesia as a drawing technique, where she would pose a question to her divining pendulum and discover the answer within the geometric drawing she made from recording the pendulum's swings, starts and stops onto graph paper. She was known to work continuously on each drawing for periods that could stretch over twenty-four hours.

Kunz sought to gain a greater understanding of nature and the world through these drawings, and her questions to the pendulum ranged from the political to the philosophical and personal. The works are not titled, rarely dated, and Kunz

refused to record their particular meanings. For her, each combination of colour, shape and thickness of line, drawn with graphite and colour pencils, held significance. Acknowledging her drawings' potential to offer different readings over time, or to hold layers of meaning, Kunz would use existing drawings as guides to diagnose patients seeking her help for ailments of the body and mind. Her drawings are visual manifestations of her spiritual and philosophical research.

Kunz's work was first exhibited posthumously in 1973, and she has since gained recognition through numerous group exhibitions. Her practice is underpinned by her belief in a holistic worldview. Systematic yet expansive in their compositions, her energy-field drawings simultaneously contain micro and macro perspectives of nature and the cosmos. She never viewed her extra-perceptions as miraculous, instead recognising that materialisation and industrialisation had buried mankind's connection to nature, and believing that in her case these natural intuitions had simply remained intact. Kunz's drawings chime with current discourses on ecology, as well as the necessity to forge meaningful connections with the environment.

Christodoulos Panayiotou often uses materials charged with history, politics or hidden narratives in his work. For this exhibition, Panayiotou has created benches from the healing stone discovered by Kunz in 1942 at the Roman

quarry in Würenlos. This quarry is now the site of the Emma Kunz Zentrum and Grotto, which opened in 1986 to preserve Kunz's spiritual findings and to extract the healing rock. Named AION A by Kunz, meaning 'without limitation', it is still available as a refined mineral remedy in pharmacies across Switzerland. Kunz continually returned to this quarry, with its harmonising effects and energies, in order to recharge her body and soul like a battery. Visitors to the Serpentine are invited to sit on Panayiotou's benches, which occupy a space between exhibition design, sculpture and energy source, to contemplate Kunz's multifaceted practice.

In an extract from a letter addressed to Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries, Panayiotou writes:

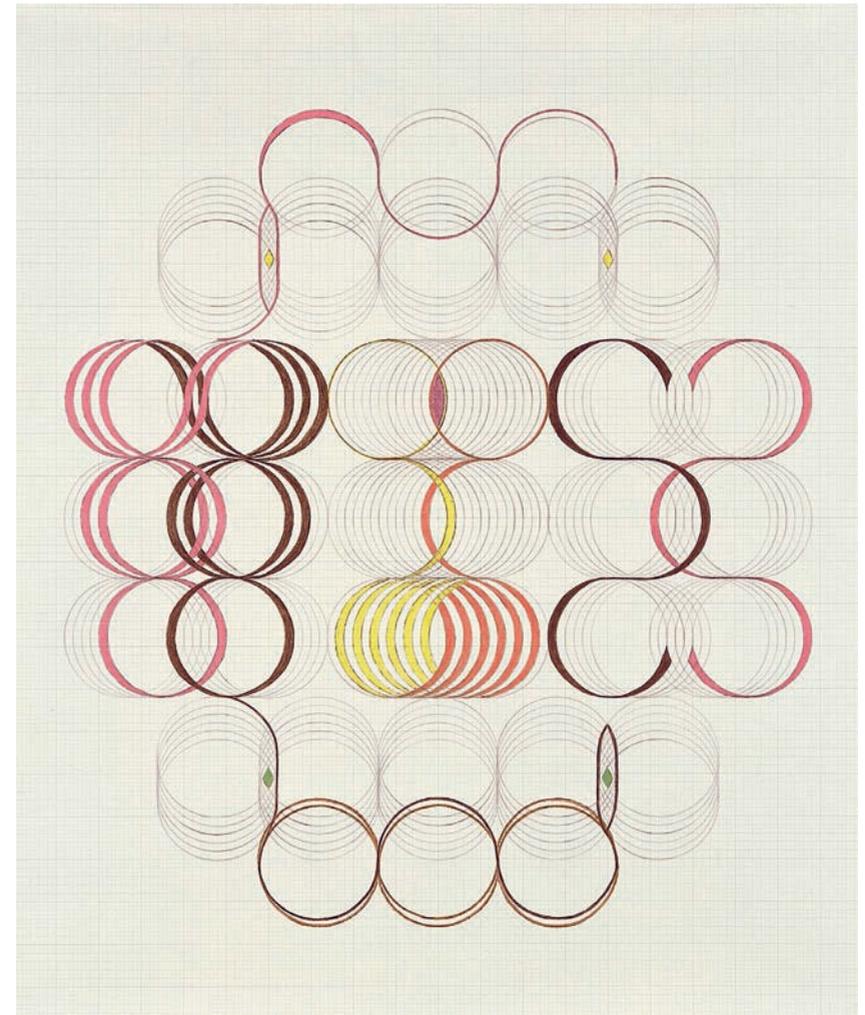
## BIOGRAPHIES

Emma Kunz (1892–1963) was a Swiss healer, researcher and artist. She did not receive a formal art education, yet in her lifetime she self-published three books and produced hundreds of geometric drawings, which were first shown posthumously in 1973 at Aargauer Kunsthau Aarau and later in Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1976. Swiss curator Harald Szeemann included her work in *Visionäre Schweiz* in Kunsthau Zürich, Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid and Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf (1992). Other group exhibitions include Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (1992) co-curated by Bice Curiger, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Bernard Macadé, and more recently *World Receivers: Georgiana Houghton – Hilma af Klint – Emma Kunz*, Lenbachhaus, Munich (2018), the 55th Venice Biennale (2013); *Ghosts in the Machine*, New Museum, New York (2012); *Gwangju Biennale* (2010) and *3 x Abstraction, New Methods of Drawing by Emma Kunz, Hilma af Klint, and Agnes Martin* at The Drawing Centre, New York, Santa Monica Museum of Art (both 2005) and IMMA, Dublin (2006).

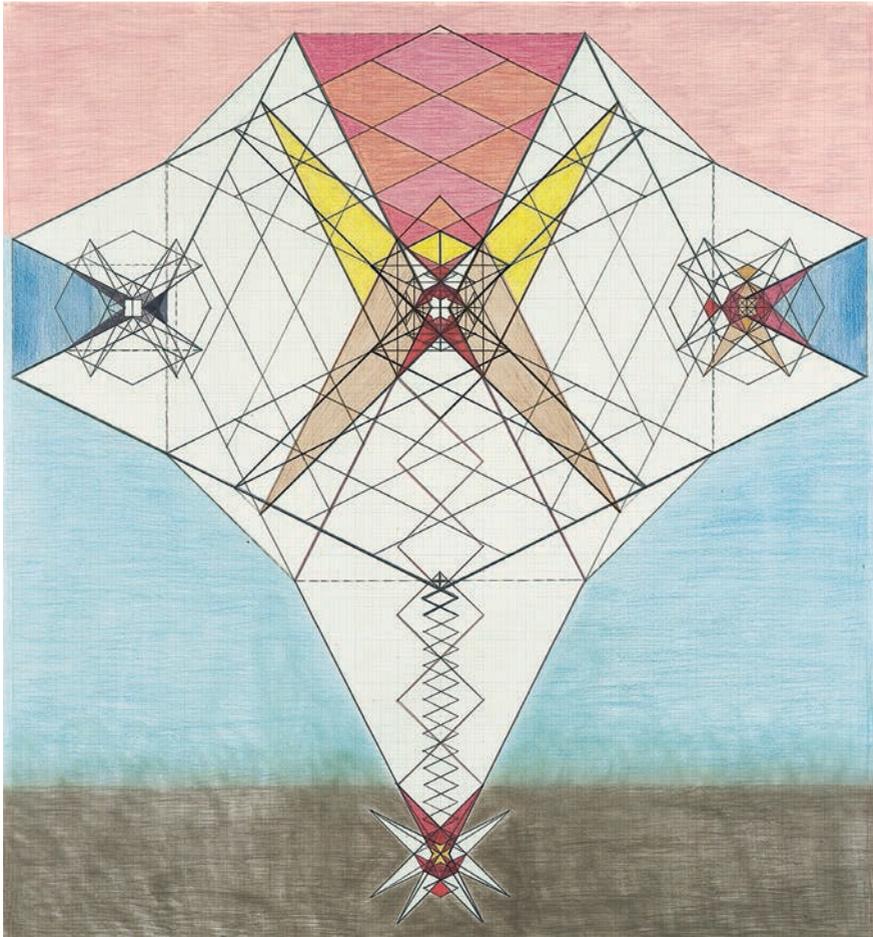
*...We have discussed several options, a number of works, different potential encounters; but today, they all seem forced to me... I shall add only a series of benches for Emma Kunz. I see them as viewing devices. They shall allow vision rather than be seen....*

*When we first met, you gave a book as a present. It was Edward Tufte's Beautiful Evidence. I went back to it on Sunday, it reads: 'At the Barnes Foundation museum, this painting merits the patient and intense concentration of an observer seated on the bench across a small room where the work resides. Placed by the museum's founder Dr. Albert C. Barnes, that bench greatly improves the view. For, as Paul Klee wrote in The Thinking Eye, "Didn't Feuerbach say: For the understanding of a picture, a chair is needed? Why a chair? To prevent the legs, as they tire, from interfering with the mind." ' ...*

Christodoulos Panayiotou (b. 1978, Cyprus) is an artist based in Limassol, Cyprus and Paris, France. His wide-ranging research focuses on the identification and uncovering of hidden narratives in the visual records of history and time. Forthcoming exhibitions include Camden Arts Centre, London (2019) and Musée d'Orsay, Paris (2019–20) and selected solo exhibitions include Casa Luis Barragán, Mexico City (2017); the 56th Venice Biennale, The Cyprus Pavilion (2015); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2013), Museum of Contemporary Art, St. Louis (2012) and Kunsthalle Zurich (2010). His work has also been shown in a number of international survey exhibitions including: the 14th Lyon Biennial (2017); the 13th Sharjah Biennial (2017); 8th Berlin Biennale (2014); dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel (2012) and 7th Liverpool Biennial (2012). He participated in the Serpentine Park Nights (2015) and Serpentine Poetry Marathon (2009). Panayiotou also founded The Island Club in Limassol, Cyprus, an artist-run exhibition space.



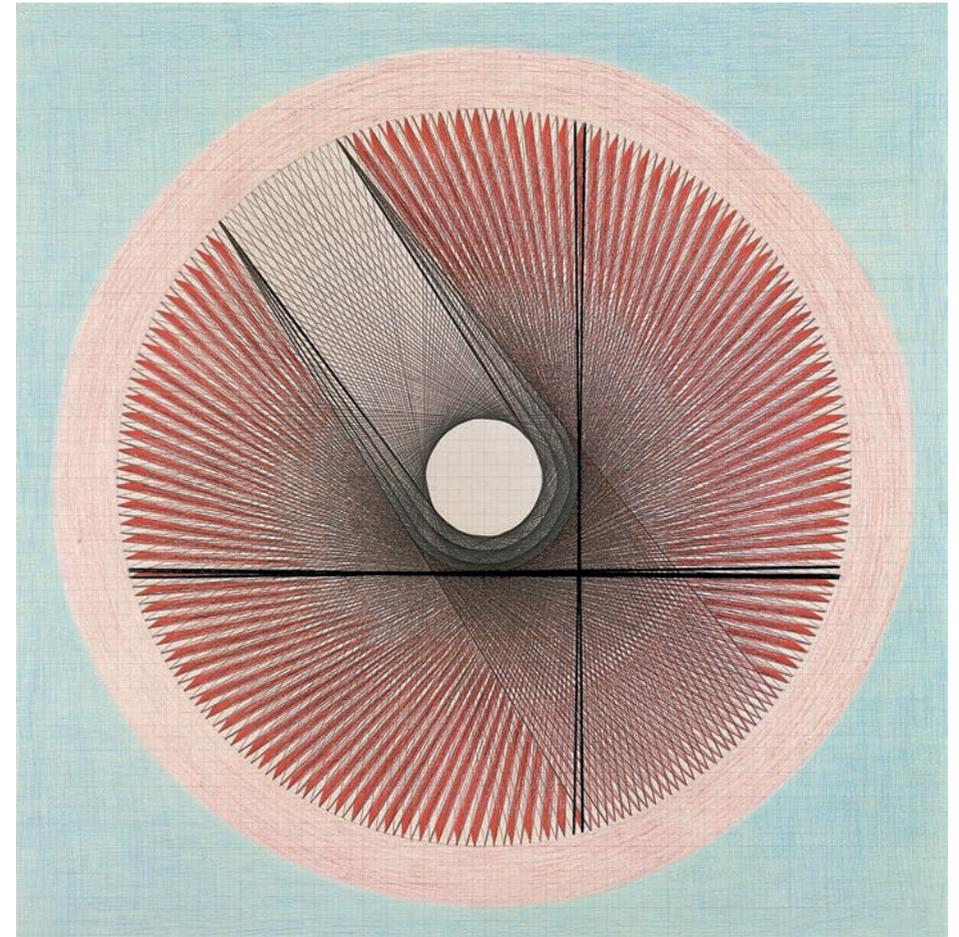
Work No. 127  
Crayon and oil crayon on graph paper with blue lines  
120 × 105 cm



*Work No. 012*  
Crayon and oil crayon on graph paper with blue lines  
110 × 105 cm

Emma Kunz's drawings are predominantly abstract in structure and form, although a small number are figurative. *Work No. 012*, often referred to as *Philosophy of Life*, is understood as a diagram of man within the cosmos, an image of Kunz's worldview. The vertical axis of the drawing signifies the upward path of

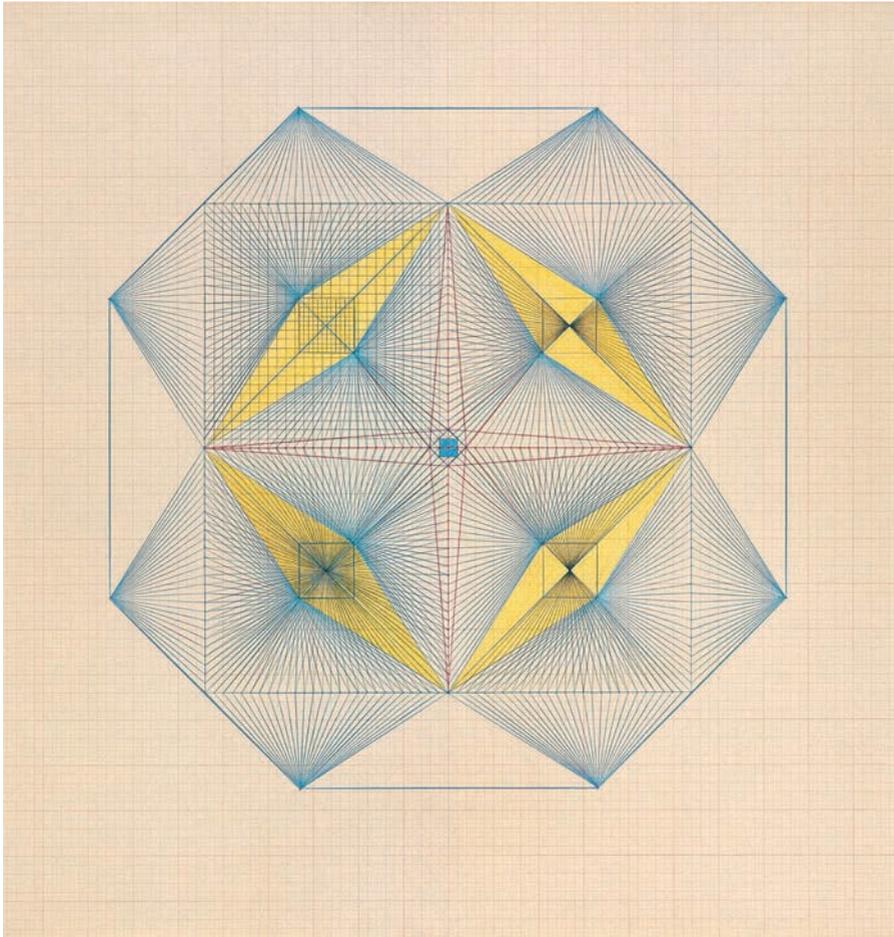
enlightenment. The horizontal axis, which forms a crucifix, positions man between evil on the left and good on the right, represented by interlocking male and female figures. Man begins existence head downwards in a birth position, within darkness, rising upright to transcendence.



*Work No. 020*  
Pencil, crayon and oil crayon on graph paper with brown lines  
79 × 79 cm

Emma Kunz lived and worked in rural Switzerland. She began making pendulum-assisted drawings in 1938 before the outbreak of the Second World War. She would ask the pendulum questions relating to current world affairs such as the outcome of future meetings between political leaders, or Switzerland's neutral status and on one occasion she attempted to 'depolarise' the negative energy of Hitler. While Kunz did not generally date her drawings, or

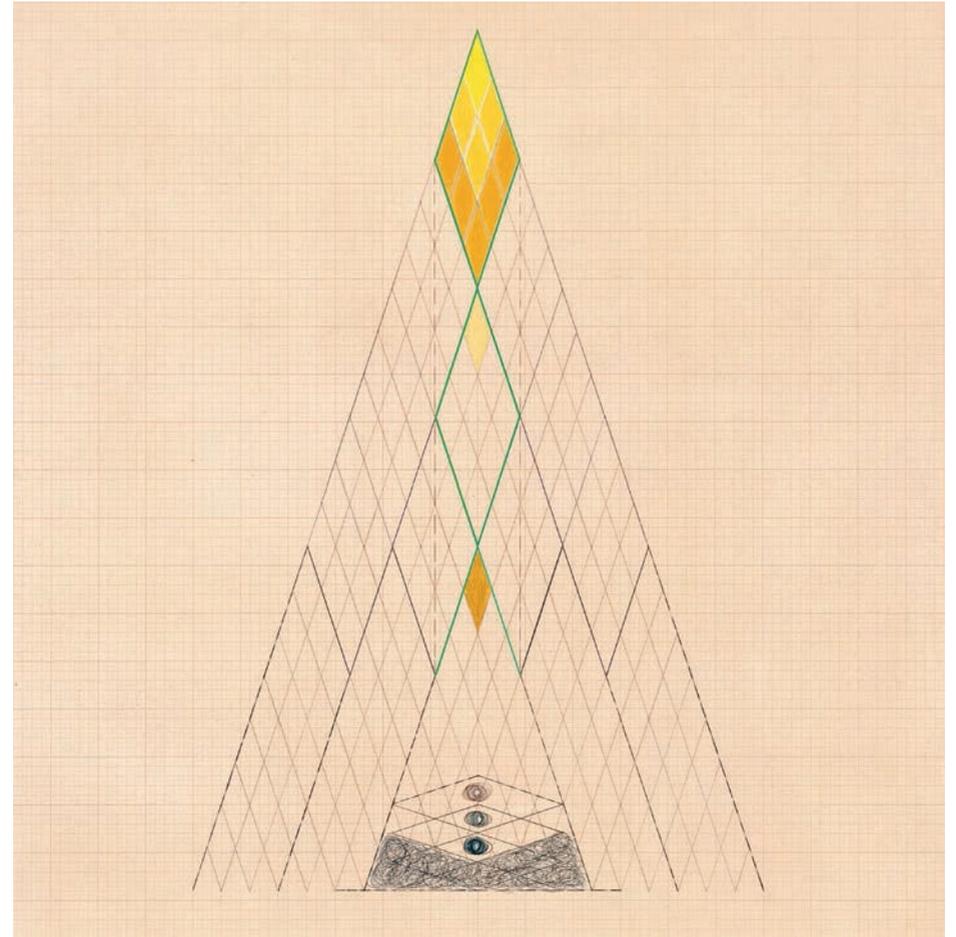
record her interpretations, it is known that *Work No. 020* was made in 1939. Kunz predicted from this drawing that America was developing a weapon capable of destroying the world. She was so alarmed by the potential misuse of this new source of energy that she uncharacteristically interrupted the completion of the drawing to telephone her friend. The prediction came true six years later with America's catastrophic detonation of Atom bombs on Japan in 1945.



*Work No. 117*  
Pencil and crayon on graph paper with brown lines  
104 × 104 cm

Art historian Dawn Ades has written on Kunz's complex compositions: 'Kunz's drawings are immediately striking for their size, precision, colourfulness, complexity and variety. At first they can appear to be repetitive, their variety overlaid by misleading associations with the spirograph and with the symmetrical shifting patterns of the kaleidoscope. It soon turns out that what appeared to be the kinds of repetitions and simple symmetries typical of these devices

is an illusion. The drawings are on a visually immersive scale; the viewer's gaze switches between detail and whole, taking in the overall, often pulsating rhythm of the meticulously precise lines. Symmetry is often illusory, as with *Work No. 117*, whose four elongated yellow diamond shapes have three different internal square patterns.'



*Work No. 190*  
Crayon and oil crayon on graph paper with blue lines  
100 × 103 cm

The pyramid is an ancient symbol that embodies a powerful connection between the earth and the universe. *Work No. 190* is Emma Kunz's final drawing, made shortly before her death from cancer in 1963.

She wrote: 'With this last picture I have opened the seventh chamber of the pyramid. My researches are now finished.'

# LIVE PROGRAMMES & EVENTS

## ONSITE

**Saturday 30 March, 3pm**, Serpentine Gallery  
Saturday Talks: Natalia Grabowska  
Assistant Curator on Emma Kunz

**Sunday 31 March, 3pm**, Serpentine Gallery  
*AION A: A Workshop on  
Emma Kunz's Healing Practice*  
On the occasion of Emma Kunz's exhibition, homeopath Jacqueline G. Schaerer leads a practical workshop on the uses of Kunz's healing rock, AION A.

**Saturday 18 May, 3pm**, Serpentine Gallery  
Saturday Talks: Melissa Blanchflower  
Curator on Emma Kunz

**Saturday 18 May, 7pm**, Serpentine Gallery  
*Saturdays Live: Tabita Rezaire,  
MerKaBa for the Hoeteps*  
Tickets £5/£4 (Conc) at [serpentinegalleries.org](http://serpentinegalleries.org)  
In the context of Emma Kunz's exhibition, artist and healer Tabita Rezaire presents a collective healing offering. Join her in a meditative journey into Kemet Yoga, a healing technology rooted in the sciences of Kemet (Ancient Egypt). This experience is open to all. Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes.

BSL interpretation is available upon prior request for all our Saturday Talks. For more information visit [serpentinegalleries.org/bsl](http://serpentinegalleries.org/bsl)

## OFFSITE

**Friday 12 April, 6:30–10:30pm**  
Ciné Lumière, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT  
*PLANTSEX*

The Serpentine Galleries' General Ecology project presents an evening of talks, screenings and performances reflecting on botany and eroticism. Participants include artist Alex Cecchetti, philosopher Emanuele Coccia, artist Jenna Sutela and medicine historian Laurence Totelin, as well as films by artists Melanie Bonajo, Dineo Seshee Bopape and Victoria Sin. The evening will also mark the launch of a special, co-edited issue of *MAL* journal, also titled *PLANTSEX*.

**Sunday 19 May, 1–11pm**, Earth  
13 Stoke Newington Road, London N16 8BH  
*The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish with Plants*  
*The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish* is a year-long symposium series and research project inviting practitioners from the arts, sciences and humanities to address consciousness, communication and intelligence across human, non-human animal, fungi, plant and artificial species. The third instalment, subtitled *with Plants*, was inspired by Emma Kunz's profound relationship with her garden and the plant life within it. On this occasion, artists, sound artists, theologians, anthropologists and biologists come together to think about plant sentience and plant intelligence, as well as forms of mysticism and healing through communication with the vegetal world. Visit the Serpentine website for a full list of participants.

## DIGITAL GUIDES

Discover more about the artists and exhibition with a free digital guide available from the Serpentine Gallery. Inviting visitors to explore the Serpentine Galleries in a new way, the digital guide offers an interactive gallery experience by providing access to additional content, audio, video and curator tours.  
Supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Front cover:  
*Work No. 003*  
Crayon on graph paper with brown lines  
96 × 96 cm

Back cover:  
*Work No. 392*  
Pencil, crayon and oil crayon on  
graph paper with brown lines  
70 × 70 cm

All images are courtesy  
Emma Kunz Zentrum

Exhibition organised by:

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Yana Peel, CEO  
Lizzie Carey-Thomas, Head of Programmes  
Melissa Blanchflower, Curator,  
Exhibitions and Public Art  
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